

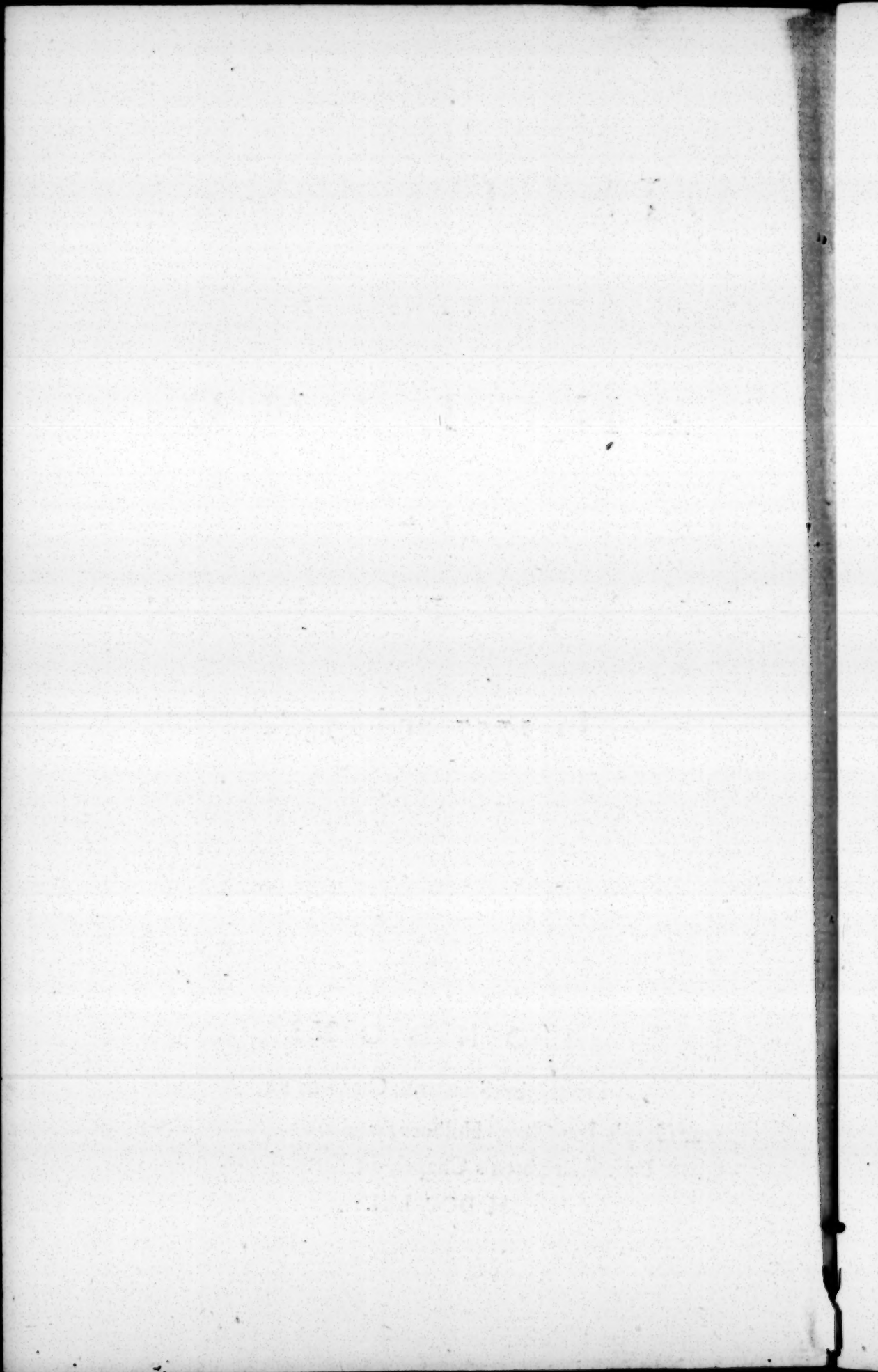
FOUR
DISCOURSES
DELIVERED IN
ENGLAND
AND
WALES,

In 1757 and 1758.

*There are some things unguarded & tending
to Antinomianism in these discourses.*

L O N D O N :

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DISCOURSE I.

Delivered in LONDON in 1757.

EPHESIANS iv. 8, 9.

“ When he ascended up on high, he led Captivity captive, and gave Gifts to men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower Parts of the Earth ? ”

I Have here three Particulars to speak of, and they all relate to our Saviour's Ascension, which was his last and finishing Transaction upon this Earth ; for altho' when he expired upon the Cross, he declared his Sufferings were finished, yet his Spirit was not inactive after its Diffolution from the Body, but was employed the whole Interval of Time that passed between his Crucifixion and Resurrection, and when the three Days and Nights of his Body's Rest in the Grave were elapsed, it re-entered his Body, and he arose from the dead, and was still engaged forty Days with his Disciples, during which Time he regulated his Family *, conferred with them concerning “ the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God ”, and promised to give them the Holy Ghost in order to qualify them to be his “ Witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Parts of the Earth. And when he had spoken these Things, he was taken up, ” and his Ascension together with the Triumphal Act that attended it is

- I. The first Thing now to be handled.
- II. The second is the Redundancy of the Triumphal Act of our Saviour at his Ascension.
- III. The third is the Identity of his Person.

* Acts i. 3, 5, 8, 9, 15.

I. As to the first of these, our Saviour on the very Morning of his Resurrection, made his Ascension known, saying to Mary Magdalene, and thro' her "to his Brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God ||." This also was predicted of him in the lxxviiith Psalm. Our Saviour overcame Sin, Death and Hell; and he arose a Victor from the Grave; and he ascended in triumph to his heavenly Kingdom.

What an universal Benefactor the World then lost! What a speedy, diligent and successful Healer were the Sick, the Dead, the Maim'd, the Lame, the Blind, the Lepers, the Paralytics, the Lunatics, the Demoniacs and the Hydropics bereaved of! How were those numerous Auditories that attended his public Ministry then in Want of an Evangelical Teacher! And what a faithful Pastor was his Congregation of "above five hundred Brethren*" at once destitute of! What a tender Paterfamilias was his own elect Family †, which also included his Apostles and seventy Disciples, stript of! What an elenctic, peremptory and decisive Apologist were they then vacated of, one who had perpetually vindicated and extricated them from the Falsties, Obloquies and capricious Questions of the Antagonists! And how did that little Family at Bethany ‡ where he constantly lodged while he resided in Judæa, and preached in the Temple at Jerusalem miss him! How unkind were those at Emmaus, where after expounding the Scripture to them on the Road in such a Manner that their Hearts burn'd at hearing him, at their Request He entered the House, made himself known to them by breaking Bread, and then disappeared on the very Evening of his Resurrection! And how dear a Guest was that other Family § at Capernaum where he continually abode while he sojourned in Galilee deprived of! Undoubtedly the Impression his Absence made upon their Hearts rose in Proportion to the Felicity they had enjoyed in his Presence, and the painful Sensation of his Departure was most experienced by his closest Intimates, and that Concern could easily have caused them much Grief

|| John xx. 17. * Cor. xv. 6. † Acts i. 15. ‡ John xii. i. Luk. xxiv. 13—31 § Matt. viii 14.

and excited in them many perplexing and anxious Thoughts, which yet our Saviour in his last Discourse to them had beforehand cautiously prevented, saying to them, " If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father ; for my Father is greater than I. John xiv. 28." Since therefore his Reascension to his heavenly Father was to his eternal Exaltation and Emolument, his Lovers should not grieve but rejoice thereat.

This also our Saviour afterwards declared saying, " Because I have said these Things unto you, Sorrow hath filled your Heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the Truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Ch. xvi. 6, 7." Herein our Saviour promised them the Holy Spirit to supply his Place during his Re-assumption into Heaven, which Promise he has since fulfilled ; and the same Holy Ghost still compensates the Want of his bodily Presence, till he returns and visibly appears again to the compleat Joy of all who long for his second Coming. Yea, the Comforter will likewise " abide with his Followers for ever," according to our Saviour's own Words, John xiv. 16. Accordingly the Apostles after his Ascension " worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem " with great Joy." Luke xxiv. 52.

The Trophies that graced his Triumph were those Captives whom he released from Captivity, and led up to his Father's Kingdom as the Reward of his Labour, and the Spoils of his Victory. This is expressed by Paul in these Words, " He captivated Captivity †. It is delivered in the Abstract, and so denotes both the prodigious Number of Captives whom our Saviour freed, and also the deplorable Depth of Slavery he freed them from. In this Work he was engaged from the Time of his Death to the Time of his Resurrection ; for tho' his Body lay dead in the Sepulchre, " his Spirit went and preached unto the " Spirits in Prison, which sometime were disobedient, when " once the Long-suffering of God waited in the Days of " Noah ‡." They had been preached to by Noah. 129

† ἡχμαλώτισεν ἀνχμαλώσιαν.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20.
Years

Years together to no Purpose, and had been imprisoned for their Unbelief all the Time from the Deluge to our Saviour's Crucifixion. Noah was the only Patriarch of that Age, and he preached as an Ordinariate, and all the Power and Energy of the Holy Ghost attended his Doctrine which was suitable to that Stand, yet he only gained his own Family, and all the rest perished.

But our Saviour preached as an Extraordinariate and as an Archœcumenicus, and therefore a superior Efficacy attended his Ministry, and crowned his Labour with Success: When therefore he approached the Prisoners, and evangelized them, they felt a powerful Conviction accompanying his Word which they had never before experienced, whereupon all those who embraced him as their Saviour were released from their Imprisonment, and followed him in his Return to his eternal Throne. Thus a numerous Retinue went up with him, who were the Effects of his Conquest, and evidenced him to have captivated them by his Grace, and demonstrated him to have been their glorious Conqueror, and the most just and worthy Triumpher in their Salvation.

Thus our Lord continued active to the last, as He did also in his Dealings with his Apostles; for after He had kept the last archœcumenic synodic Conference with them in Jerusalem, He led them out of the City to that Part of the Mount of Olives next to Bethany, where lifting up his Hands over them He blessed them, and in that very liturgic Action He withdrew from them, entered into the Cloud, and ascended far above all Heavens, and retook that Place at his Father's right Hand from whence He formerly descended. *

II. I am next to speak of the Redundancy of the Triumphal Act of our Saviour at his Ascension. When our Saviour ascended, he as a triumphant Victor distributed Gifts, "He gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, Verse 11." These he dispersed as so many Medals on whom his Image was stamp'd, that they might convey the Knowledge of him over the Face of

* Luke xxiv. 50. 51.

the whole Earth, and continue his Remembrance among his People till his second Coming. And these illustrious Coins, these special *χαρίσματα* have both by their Labours and Writings perpetuated the Commemoration of his Incarnation, Birth, Life, Crucifixion, Resurrection Ascension, and Intercession even to this present Day.

Yet our Saviour the more to signalize his remarkable Conquest and triumphant Ascension did also scatter his Gifts among Men promiscuously, and did impart them to them without any Respect to their Excellency, Worthiness and Desert; thus the Writer of this Epistle declares, "He gave Gifts to Men." And this superabundant Liberality of our Saviour was also prophesied of him by the Psalmist saying, "Thou hast received Gifts for Men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them†." This exceeding great goodness of our Saviour in bestowing his Gifts on Men as Men was intended by him for their Conversion and Salvation, and therefore when any who have possessed wonderful Talents† are disowned by him, it is their own Fault; yet his Children ought to make so much the more blest Use of his Endowments.

When indeed any enjoy special and singular *χαρίσματα*, it is as Paul here declares, "for the edifying of the Body of Christ," Verse 12. and of such our Saviour expects a suitable Improvement, that when he comes he may receive "his own with Usury‡". Wherefore no one ought to grudge or envy those who have the most real Talents and the most peculiar *δωματα*, since the greatest Presents were made by our Saviour according to his own Will, and were bestowed by him out of the Fulness of his Heart as a Redundancy of his Triumphal Act at his Ascension. Besides also those who receive the greatest Gifts and Endowments from him are most accountable to him for the Use of them, according to his own Words, Luke xii. 48. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

Those who are invested with the chiefest *δωματα* and usefullest *εργήματα* ought to cleave closest to our Saviour; they should still continue so sensible of their Deficiencies,

† Psalm lxxviii. 18. † Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23. † Luke xix. 23.

Unattainments and Imperfections, as to lie as poor Sinners at the Feet of Jesus, and possess their whole Salvation in his Person. All Gifts and Graces come from and lead to the Saviour, and when the Persons who are arrayed and qualified with them look not so much at the Gift as at the Giver, but are more attached to the Donor than to the Donation, then is our Saviour's Scope and Aim fulfilled in bestowing his gracious Benefices; and such charismatical Servants are Blessings to his Ecclesiola.

III. The Identity of his Person is represented by Paul in these Words, " Now that he ascended, what is it but " that he also descended first into the lower Parts of the " Earth?" And then he adds in the following Verse, " He " that descended is the same also that ascended up far " above all Heavens, that he might fill all Things." I will not puzzle you with metaphysical Disquisitions concerning personal Identity, and what it is which constitutes personal Distinction; since we have a surer and conciser Method of being assured of the Identity of our Saviour's Person; his Cross's Signatures are his indelible Characters; the Wounds in his Hands, Feet and Side are the Marks whereby He is known. Accordingly when He appeared to his Disciples on the Day of his Resurrection, He shewed them " his Hands, Feet and Side *", as the infallible Tokens of his being the same Person who was crucified, whereof also he eight Days after gave Thomas a special Conviction, challenging him " to put his Finger into " the Prints of the Nails in his Hands, and to thrust his " Hand into his Side." And these are the Marks whereby he is still known to his Brethren, on whom he hath also pronounced a Blessing, because " they have not seen, and " yet have believed."

Altho' you see not our Saviour with your bodily Eyes, yet you can come as near to him as Thomas; you may in Spirit see, feel and handle his Wounds; you must thrust your Fingers into his Nail-prints and your Hands into his Side, and so familiarize these Characteristics unto you, that at his second Appearance, when he shews these

* Luke xxiv. 40. John xx. 26, 27, 29.

Marks, you may be assured he is the same Jesus who died for you on the Cross.

That our Saviour has since his Ascension been seen by Stephen, Paul and John is an Evidence of his domestic Love and Familiarity, whereinto each Believer ought to insinuate himself for his own Happiness, since in this Connexion no one is preferred for his own Merits; but it depends entirely on the free Grace and Good-will of our Saviour, who also frequently chooses the most worthless and undeserving Individuals to be his nearest Associates and closest Confidants. We are nevertheless ascertained that the very "same Jesus" † clothed with Humanity, possessed of Divinity, veiled in a human Body, Soul and Spirit, wearing the Marks of the Wounds he received on the Cross, and especially displaying his Side's Wound as the invariable Characteristic of the Identity of his Person will "so come in like Manner as he was seen by his Apostles go into Heaven," and will then give himself to be kissed and embraced by his Intimates, and will accept the Salutations and receive the Greetings of his domestic Relations. Wherefore we should now so acquaint ourselves with him, and inure ourselves to his Wounds, that when he comes we may know him at first Sight, and converse with him most familiarly. Yea, we should be such Practitioners in conversing with him, that no Scholar should be more versed in his Books, no Artisan in this City more expert in his Occupation than we are in our Approximations and Inter-courses with him. Then will every Interview with him in Spirit be a Grace, till we behold him bodily; Our Connexion with him will be a Stand, and our Communion with him will become a new Nature, whose chief Gratification and Felicity is "his second Appearance without Sin unto Salvation. Heb. ix. 28."

† Acts i. 11.

DISCOURSE II.

Delivered the same Year at ROSSGOCH in
RADNORSHIRE, SOUTH-WALES.

LUKE XV. 20.

“ When he was yet a great Way off, his Father
“ saw him, and had Compassion, and ran, and
“ fell on his Neck, and kissed him.”

IN the Holy Scripture our Saviour's Love to Sinners is variously represented, and Jesus the Friend of Sinners is characterized in divers Instances ; and yet in none of them is the Tenderness and Affection wherewith he receives them more eminently and notably exhibited than in this Example of the Prodigal returning to his Father.

Our dear Saviour is indeed “ the Father of Spirits *” veiled in Flesh, who, tho' they are fallen from him, do yet no sooner come to him than he receives them with the most paternal Love and the most cordial Affection. And so many are the Beauties of this remarkable Example that if I particularized them all, they would afford Matter for a Multitude of Discourses, which if written would fill many Volumes.

The Text I have read to you furnishes me with the three following Particulars.

I. The prodigious Distance whereto the Prodigal had strayed from his Father.

II. The gracious Reception he met with on his Return.

III. The pardoning Kiss his Father gave him.

* Heb. xii. 9.

I. As to the prodigious Distance whereto the Prodigal had strayed from his Father, we are told in the thirteenth Verse of this Chapter that he "took his Journey into a far Country," and in the Text that "he was a great Way off," a very "great Way off" indeed; he wandered to so great a Distance from his Father, and was at such an immense Elongation from him, that he never thought of returning till he was reduced to the utmost Extremity, and the very Exigence of his Condition constrained him to come home again.

Men's Distance from God is the Cause of all their Misery. When Adam had eaten the forbidden Fruit he fled from his Maker, "and hid himself," Gen. iii. 10. And this is both the Propensity and Practice of the fallen Race at this Day; they run away from their Creator, that they may do their own Wills, and indulge their own Inclinations, and gratify their own Appetites. This Alienation from God and Estrangement from him is the Source of all the Sin and Wickedness that is in the World; yea "the whole World lieth in Wickedness," 1 John v. 19. since it deviated from God, and rov'd to a vast Distance from him.

This Estrangement from God is the Cause of the sinful Contagion and Ruin of the Body, which being itself vitiated taints and infects the Soul likewise; the earthen Vessel presses down the Soul, and furiously subdues and captivates it, so that carnal People who give way to their bodily Motions, Affections and Inclinations, and are led by them, are hurried into all Manner of sensual Gratifications and Indulgencies, and "fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition*."

Yea, the Soul herself also is radically deprav'd and essentially invenom'd by her Disunion from God, so that she is the Seat of Defilement in the human Composition; even the Soul of an Infant since the lapse of the Protoplasts is no more born as a *Tabula rasa*, nor is that Saying of an Orator "*Homines nec boni neque; mali nascuntur*" true; but every Soul is originally disordered and spoil'd. Consonant to this Principle our Saviour himself has specified the Soul as the moving Force which accelerates the

* 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Body to the Practice of Voluptuousness, Intemperance and Luxury. † The Body is the Machine which the Soul actuates and directs to perpetrate its Desires, so that the ψυχὴς Ἀνθρώπου as Paul ‡ styles him, the Man whose Soul is unconverted is by the Darkness of his Understanding, the Preposterousness of his Will and the Disconcertedness of his Faculties and mental Properties embarrass'd with Evil and overwhelm'd therewith. The Body also reciprocally embroils and overpowers the Soul, and thus they mutually infest and entangle each other in Iniquity. Yet as Sin at its Entrance into the World came in by the Desire § of the Soul, so the Soul is the Cause of every subsequent Transgression.

But here the Heart, as our Saviour denominates it, is also to be taken Notice of; the Spirit of Man is ruined by its Discommunion with God, and is become the principal Source of all Sorts of Wickedness. "For from within," saith our Lord ||, out of the Heart of Men proceed evil "Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornications, Murders, Thefts, "Covetousness, Wickedness, Deceit, Lasciviousness, an "evil Eye, Blasphemy, Pride, Foolishness: All these "evil Things come from within, and defile the Man." The Heart of every natural Man is hard and insensible of divine Things, and is as dead thereto as a Stone: Nothing can penetrate and pervade it. When therefore the Holy Ghost, who is the Mother of all new-born Hearts and the Regenerator of blessed Spirits, begets a Person anew in Christ Jesus, he takes away the stony Heart, and ejects the wicked Spirit according to his Promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. where he hath said, "A new Heart also will I give you, "and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take "away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give "you an Heart of Flesh."

The Sinfulness of Mens Lives and Actions, the Hardness and Insensibility of their Hearts, the Confusion, Hurry and Disquietude of their Thoughts, the Idleness and Disorder of their Words and the Iniquity of their Actions are all the Effects of their having roam'd from their Father's House, and of their being immensely distanc'd from him. From hence it comes to pass that People live without

† Luke xii. 19. ‡ 1. Cor. ii. 14. § Gen. iii. 6. || Mark vii. 21. 22. 23.

God in the World in all Manner of Riot and Excess, committing Sin with Greediness, following the Course of their own blind Affections, and executing the wild and extravagant Impulses of their own unruly Passions. The evil Desires are never satisfied; but sinful Lusts by being pamper'd only gain more Strength and become more boisterous, so that they more imperiously enslave those who are carried away by them, domineer over them more tyrannously, and precipitate them into grosser Enormities and more pernicious Exorbitancies.

This is the miserable and dangerous Situation of Mankind in their State of Exile and Desertion from God, the original Occasion whereof is their apostatizing from their Creator and revolting from him. Our Saviour very well knew this, and therefore when he was upon Earth he looked with an Eye of Pity and Compassion upon the human Species; and when he was pleas'd to favour us with his Sentiments upon this Topic, he declared concerning this World, that "the Works thereof are evil." John vii. 7. And when he characterized Men in their natural Condition, he denominated them "Wolves, Dogs, Swine, Goats, Foxes, Vipers, Serpents and Devils."* The Apostles also his immediate Followers decypher Worldlings in the same Characters, styling them "Beasts, Brute-Beasts, Evil Beasts, grievous Wolves, Dogs, Swine and Devils;"† all which Appellations specify the total Degeneracy and utter Abalienation of the human Creatures from their Creator, and their diametrical Opposition to him; in so much that they are become absolute Renegadoes and Run-aways, who are run to such a huge Distance, and have made such large Excursions that they are arriv'd to an immeasurable Longitude from him. Wherefore also their Return to him would have been an utter Impossibility, and their Recovery absolutely impracticable; the Way of Access

* Matt. vii. 6. 15. x. 16. Luke xiii. 32. Matt. xxiii. 33. John vi. 70. Matt. xxv. 33. John viii. 44.

† Jude ver. 10. Acts xx. 29. Phil. iii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 22. 1 Tim. iii. 11. Tit. ii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 32. Tit. i. 12. Acts xiii. 10.

to him would have been quite inaccessible, but he has himself stepped over the vast Chasm; our dear Creator has taken Flesh, and has travers'd the vast Distance between Heaven and Earth in search of his vagabond Creatures; he has been upon Earth in Quest of lost Sinners; he has been a Man in this World on Purpose to seek and save straggling and perishing Men, and has been slain in the Pursuit of them; he has been suspended upon the Cross for poor prodigal Wretches; he has been crucified in their Stead, and has been wounded to Death in their behalf, that he might regain them as his own Property, and bring them who have gone astray from him into a domestic Nearness and indissoluble Union with himself.

The Magnetism of our Saviour's Wounds could of itself attract, and the Beauties of his sufferings could effectually influence Sinners to turn to Him; yet Mankind are so far gone from God and so far sunk in Corruption, that they do not come to the Saviour without being drove by Necessity and compell'd by Terror. Yet so gracious and loving a Saviour is Jesus that He does not reject those who come to Him merely out of Distress, but He readily accepts them.

Ye also were sometime a great way off, ye have wandered in this World as in a far Country, and have straggled to an exceeding great Distance from your Heavenly Father. How long have you like Swine wallowed in the Mire of Sin and Pollution? How long have you fed on the Husks of worldly Trifles and Vanities? How often have you refused to come to our Saviour, when he drew you "with the Cords of Love?"* Yea, would you ever have bethought yourselves of coming to the Saviour at all, if you had not been forced by your spiritual Woe and Want, and terrified by the Apprehensions of Death and future Misery? Yet you have not sinned beyond the Reach of our Saviour's Mercy, you are still within the Limits of his Grace; and he has so long spared you and had Patience with you on Purpose that he might save you, and that you might come to him, and be paternally received and embraced by him. And this is the second Particular to be spoken of,

II. The gracious Reception the Prodigal met with on his Return. And this was far beyond his Expectation; for

* Hof. xi. 4.

when he saw he had deserted his Father, “wasted his Substance with riotous living,” and had so far lost all sense of filial Relation and Obligation that he was now returning to his Father merely out of Need and Indigence, he then quitted all hope of being look’d upon as a Son and Heir, and was willing to be accepted as a “Hired Servant,” and to be used as a Day-labourer. In this Sensation of Heart “he arose and came to his Father.” But he had no sooner turned his Face towards his Father, but his Father ran and met him more than half way, yea more than three Quarters of the Way; as soon as he directed his Course towards his Father’s House his Father skipp’d over all the rest of the Way, and came to him.

Our Saviour “like a Roe or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices†” pursued after you, he skipp’d over Mountains of Difficulty to save you; and so great a Way did he run to overtake you and make you happy, that he leap’d from his Father’s Throne into a Manger, He abandoned the eternal Glories of his Godhead, and put on a Body of Flesh and Blood for your Redemption; yea, he ran through the Course of this miserable Life, and ran into the Pangs and Pains of Death for your eternal Salvation. This Race did the Saviour run to fetch you home to Himself and to introduce you into his Father’s House.

It is the common Effect of natural Affection and Consanguinity when a Father, whose Son has neither forsook his Person nor wasted his Substance, but has kept his Commandments, and abode in his House, feels an Emotion of Love and Sympathy, when he sees his Son in Distress, and meditates and accomplishes his Relief. But it is the singular and especial Property of our Saviour, that he as a loving and tender Parent “sympathizes with the ignorant, and those who are out of the way.‡” He has Compassion on those who have forsaken him, wasted his Substance and violated his Precepts. Therefore his Bowels yearn towards you, and although you have hitherto behaved undutifully and rebelliously, yet he so loves you, that he longs to embrace you; and he will forgive and forget all your past Misdemeanours; and as the prodigal’s Father never once exprobrated him with his manifold Offences, so

† Cant. viii. 14.

‡ Heb. v. 2.

neither will our Saviour ever upbraid you with your former Sins and Follies, but will reinstate you in his Favour with the uttermost Joy and Complacency.

Our Saviour declares that He and the Holy Ghost “re-
“joice over every Sinner that repenteth,” ver. 6, 9 and
10, and in the 25th verse of this Chapter He expresses his
Joy by “Symphony and Choirs§” singing. It is an unspeak-
able Grace that our Saviour receives Sinners of the Gen-
tiles as gratuitously as He does his own People the Jews, and
makes them Partakers of the same Blessings with the happy
Hebrews. And thus he reinitiates every individual Offender
that returns to him into his Father’s House with all the Ex-
pressions of Exultation and Gladness.

III. The pardoning Kiss the Prodigal’s Father gave him
is the next Thing to be spoken of, “He fell on his Neck
“and kissed him.” The Behaviour of Joseph to his
Brethren is an especial Instance of Love, notwithstanding
they had been difficultly prevail’d upon not to slay him, and
had actually “sold him to the Ishmaelites,” yet when they
came to him in Want of Sustenance and famishing with
Hunger, “his Bowels did yearn,” and “he could not
“refrain himself,” but “made himself known to his Bre-
“thren, and he fell upon his Brother Benjamin’s Neck,
“and wept, and then he kiss’d all his Brethren, and
“wept” Tears of Love “upon them. ||” Thus he with
a Kiss pardoned all their past Barbarity and hard Hearted-
ness to him, acknowledged them his Brethren, and re-
ceived them with a most fraternal, yea, even with a pa-
ternal Compassion and Tendernefs, and cheerfully own’d
the Grace of “God had sent him thither to save their
Lives.*” This is but a very distant and imperfect Re-
semblance of our Saviour’s Love to returning Sinners; for
this was the Love of one creature to another, whereas our Sa-
viour’s Love to Souls is the Love of the Creator to the Crea-
ture, the Love of God to Man, the Love of the Saviour
to sinful Man.

Since therefore the Son of God has come so far from his
Father’s Throne to meet us that he has stept over the
whole Space between Heaven and Earth, and is arrived so
near us that he has put on human Nature on Purpose to

§ Συμφωνίας καὶ χορῶν. || Gen. xxxvii. 28. xliii. 30. xlv.
i. 14, 15. * Gen. xlv. 7.

kiss and greet us in our Likeness and Similitude, how inexpressible is his Love towards us ! And how should his gracious Condescension constrain every Heart to accept his tender Salutations ! Yea, how speedily should every one return to Him, who has taken such a long Journey to fetch them home to Himself ! Return to Him therefore ye vagrant Sinners, come ye Stragglers and Runagates to Jesus your Saviour, and find your House and Home in his Arms and Heart : resort to his Cross all ye who have long rang'd abroad and wander'd at large, and rambled at random in the Wilderness of this World : address yourselves to him as poor Prodigals who have spent all their Substance ; apply to him as spendthrifts who have impoverish'd themselves by their own Extravagance, and make his Cross your Abode and his Wounds your eternal Habitations.

Our Saviour will have you for Himself, He calls you to Him, and will gather you into his Bosom : He will forgive all your past Nolition and Refusal of turning to Him ; He will blot out all your former Unwillingness and Denial in his Blood, and admit you to his nearest Embraces and Familiarities. Surrender yourselves to Him therefore, and he will receive you with the most cordial Enamouredness, and make you his willing People.

Neither let the vast Lengths to which you have wander'd from him discourage and dishearten you from coming home to him again : He pities and sympathizes with you at your utmost Extremities, and though you have expatiated from Him to the greatest Latitude, yet he longs to have you home again ; the Door of his pierc'd Heart stands open to give you Entrance, and his Arms which were stretch'd out upon the Cross are ready to environ and enclose you for ever. He will forgive your past Errors and Extravagations ; He will pardon all your Neglect of him in Time past, and will absolve you from all your Offences and Misprisions ; He will wash you from all your Sins in his Blood, and acquit you from all Crimes in Thought, Word and Deed, and reckon you among his dearest Confidants, and take you into an irrefragable Closeness to Himself, and eternally fix you in an inseparable domestic Union with Him.

Our Saviour's Heart burns with Love towards you, He is ready to fall on your Necks, and to kiss away all your Sins and Transgressions ; he longs to impart the Kiss of

Absolution to you: He would gladly save you, and will even rejoice in your eternal Welfare. Accept therefore a Kiss from those dear Lips of his which grew pale, languish'd and breath'd out Forgiveness with their last Breath upon the Cross for you: give him his Hearts Joy in becoming his, that he may "be merry and glad" * at your Recovery, that he may cloath you with the "best Robe" of his own Righteousness, and may pronounce you "alive" and "found" in him, and may keep you "safe" and "found" in his House and in his Father's Family for ever.

DISCOURSE III.

Delivered at *Bristol* in 1758, on *Hebr. ii. 9.*
But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the Suffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour.

IN this Epistle to the Hebrews the Personality of our Saviour is peculiarly set forth, and He is herein described as the Prophet, Priest and King of his People, whose Salvation properly consists in being instructed in and united to his Person; wherefore He is exhibited as the true Messias from the Beginning to the End of this Letter: and since among his most remarkable Transactions his Incarnation and his Crucifixion are two of the most important that relate to his Messiahship, and wherein his Children are most intimately interested, these are both delivered in the Text which has been read to you, wherein also the Benefit and Property that accrues to our Saviour thereby is specified.

* Luke xv. 32.

These are the main Subjects treated of in this Writing to the Jews ; and since Jesus is also the Saviour of the Gentiles, each convicted Sinner of both Sorts ought to seek and find his Salvation in Him. Accordingly in this Discourse are three Particulars to be spoken of,

I. Our Saviour's overlooking the Nature of Angels, and taking upon Him the human Nature.

II. The End for which He took human Nature on Him, *the Suffering of Death.*

III. The Reward which He by both these obtained.

I. As to the first of these, if our Saviour had respected the Worth, Excellency, Understanding, Ability and Capacities of the Creatures whose Nature He was to take upon Him, then certainly He would have assumed the angelical preferably to the human ; but since He sought for no Motive out of Himself for becoming a Man, his own free Love was the Cause of his taking a Creature's Nature upon Him, and his own free Choice was the Cause of his Inhumanation : hence it is that *He is not yet accepted of Angels, but He is accepted of Abraham's Seed, ver. 16. **

Yea, such was our Saviour's Condescension that He assum'd the miserable, wretched, frail, ruin'd and mortal Nature of Man ; He did not fear to insinuate Himself into the fallen Nature, and to bear the innocent Infirmities thereof. Indeed it is a Truth above all human Wisdom and Comprehension, that our Saviour would prefer the *lower* before the higher, and put on the human Nature before the angelic ; yet such was the Paroxysm of Love which raptur'd Him at the Time of his Incarnation, that He chose to be a weak, frail and ignoble Man rather than a transcendently glorious Spirit ; accordingly *He was made a little lower than the Angels*, and became a poor, despis'd, afflicted Man : He was born in a little City, brought forth at an Inn, and swath'd and laid in a Manger.

He came into the World not with the Grandeur of an Emperor nor with the Stateliness of a Prince, but (tho' descended from Kings originally) was however derivatively

* Οὐ γὰρ ἔτι Ἀγγέλων ἐπιδραμεύονται.

born of ordinary Parentage, being as a Lamb year'd of a jewish Maid, swaddled and laid in a Cratch amidst the Beasts. So low did He stoop, so far did he condescend to save Sinners, that He preferr'd the human Nature to the angelic, the Manger to the Throne, and the worthless Humanity to the great and glorious Divinity.

By this exceeding great Humiliation our Saviour is become the Proprietor of the whole human Race, insomuch that every human Creature is entitl'd to look upon Him as his Creator and Redeemer; and every Man born into this World ought to own the Infant Jesus to be his Lord and God. Henceforth therefore you must respect the Child born in Bethlehem and laid in a Manger as both your Maker and Saviour; you must give the Babe Room in your Hearts, and receive Him in your Arms, and solace yourselves with Him as the Cause of your Happiness and the only Author of your Salvation.

Tho' you do not see Him bodily, yet you may in Spirit come as near to Him as the Shepherds, and love and embrace Him cloath'd in Flesh, become an Infant of Days and lying in a Manger for your eternal Welfare; with this Child you ought to delight yourselves continually, and to be happy in Him from Day to Day.

II. The End for which He took human Nature on Him was *the Suffering of Death*. Our Saviour's Incarnation and Crucifixion are so co-join'd that both of them are weighty Blessings to his People; Bethlehem and Calvary are nearly connected together: Our Saviour was born to suffer, and from the Beginning of his Life to the End He endured Griefs and Afflictions. He underwent all the Difficulties, Hardships and Inconveniencies of this present Life, and He is the only King who can justly say to his Subjects, " I have endur'd Want and Necessity; I have gone thro' Cold and Hunger, Distress and Need; I have experienc'd all the heavy Circumstances of human Life; I am acquainted with all Sorrows and Pains and Griefs for you: I know all your Troubles and Annoyances from first to last: *I am a Worm and no Man; a Reproach of Men, and despised of the People.* Ps. xxii. 6. I have endur'd Watchings, Fastings, Tears and Temp-
tations

“ tations on your Account; I have felt bodily Smart,
 “ Trouble of Soul and Vexation of Spirit from the Man-
 “ ger to the Crofs for your eternal Well-being and Feli-
 “ city.”

This is our Saviour's Heart's Language to you; for He knows all your Heavinesses and Incommodities not only by his Deity, whereby also He knows all Things; but He has been a Man on Purpose that He might experimentally familiarize all your Circumstances to Him, and has gone thro' the various Vicissitudes of this transitory Time; indeed his whole Abode upon Earth was intermingl'd with Sickneses and Sufferings, and his Life was one continu'd Course of Tortures; He was oppress'd with your Guilt and Penalty from his *swaddling Clothes* to his *fine linen* wherein He was buried: and his laying down his Life for you was the last and most eminent Instance of his Passion.

If a Man died instead of a condemn'd Criminal, or if a King quitted his Throne, liv'd a poor, desolate Life, and at last died for his Subjects, it would be but a very weak Instance of little Love in Comparison of our Saviour, who is the King of Kings and Lord of all; yet He left his majestic Royalty, made an Interval in his Divinity, took Flesh and died upon the Crofs to save his rebellious People. He so lov'd his human Creatures as to become one of them; and tho' He was their Creator, yet He took their Nature; He became their Surrogate and Substitute, and suffer'd the bitter Pangs of Death to save them from Death and insure eternal Life to them.

No Martyr ever endur'd so painful a Death as the Saviour; for He bore the very Curse and Condemnation thereof; his Death was not only unnatural and untimely, but also penal by the Law; because *He was made of a Woman and made under the Law*. Gal. iv. 4. Since He took on Him the Nature so He also bore the Punishment of sinful Man; wherefore his was an accursed Death: He was punish'd in Body, Soul and Spirit for the Disobedience of his Creatures, and in his Death He felt the utmost Rigour of the Law; tho' He was a Son, yet He learn'd Obedience by the Things which He suffer'd; his Punishment was not mitigated, his Execution was not at all abated on Account of his being the Son of God; but He paid the whole Debt; He suffer'd

all the Chastisement due to Sin, and thereby made Satisfaction for every human Being; He made a full Amends for all the Offences of Men, and thus is *He the true Light and Salvation of every Man that cometh into the World,* John i. 9.

Thus our Saviour has by his Incarnation and Crucifixion purchased all Mankind; and He is their right Lord and Proprietor; He has both by his Birth and Death appropriated every human Being as his own; and all are obliged to surrender themselves to Him and to be his. He claims you all, and if any would not give him his Property, it would be the greatest Treason and Sacrilege. The condemning Sin now is when any will not submit to our Saviour, but persist in an unjust Detention and Withholding of themselves from Him: Yea, who that is our Saviour's but would be ashamed of having heretofore indulg'd a wilful Reluctance and Unsubjection?

III. I am to speak of the Reward which our Saviour has obtained both by his Incarnation and Passion, which is also by the Writer of this Epistle here express'd by his being *crowned with Glory and Honour*. Though our Saviour is ascended and repossest'd of his divine Glory and Honour, yet He awaits the Travail of his Soul and the full Harvest of the ransom'd who are the due Reward of his meritorious Nativity and Decease. Since our Saviour has stoop'd so low, and taken so much Pains to save you, how can you do otherwise than give yourselves to Him without Disguise and without Reserve? Who can do otherwise than be amazed at the Trouble our Saviour has had to rescue such a worthless, undeserving Creature as he feels himself to be? Therefore cast yourselves down at his Manger, and kiss the Infant Jesus, and be kiss'd by Him into eternal Life.

Whosoever possesses the Babe born in Bethlehem enjoys such unspeakable Graces and Blessings for which he can never be thankful enough; and yet these Enjoyments quicken an insatiable Appetite after more; for all the Salutations and Embraces of the little Jesus ever produce a stronger Attraction to Him and a closer Communion with Him, till his Children as if wrapt in his swadling Clothes and laid in his Manger enjoy a divorceless Connexion with Him.

Yea,

Yea, by conversing with the Child Jesus each can acquire the true Simplicity, and become a Child without which there is no entering into the Kingdom of Heaven; and when Persons are therein already, their Childlikeness is maintained and their Happiness ripened and consummated only by conversing with Him. For we can and ought to remain his Children both in this and the next Life, and not evaporate as Triflers and Players.

Although our Saviour is adult, He still retains the Innocence and Integrity of his Childhood; He has still the Truth and Love of his Infancy in Him; and even when He expired on the Cross had no Malice nor Hatred against his Enemies; but pray'd his Father to forgive them; you can therefore at his Cross partake of his pure infantile Nature; you may in Spirit discern Him suffering Death for you, till you are savingly enamoured with Him.

No one must look on the crucified Saviour as *Objectum Commiserationis*, for that would be a more effectual Way to subvert and annihilate his Crucifixion and the Effects thereof than the bitterest Enmity and the cruelest Persecution. Our Saviour very well knew this, and therefore He denominated one of his favourite Apostles a Satan for compassionating Him; and directly forbid the Daughters of Jerusalem condoling Him, when He was going to the Place of his Crucifixion *. But you must look upon the Saviour bleeding to Death for you as *Objectum Amoris*, who did and suffered so much for you, till you are enamour'd with Him, and your Hearts burn in Love to Him whose Heart burnt to Death in Love to you.

Since therefore your God has so lov'd you as to die upon the Cross for you, nothing should be nearer and dearer to you than his Martyrdom; you ought to receive Him with open Arms and Heart, and have Him with you through all Conditions of Life; and then how scone'd and variegated so ever your vicissitudes may be, you will continue happy in his Arms and Heart. Be and remain therefore poor Sinners at his Cross, and continue communing with Him.

* Matt. xvi. 22. 23. Luk. xxiii. 27. 28.

May his Inhumanation and Crucifixion be still more dear to you, and familiarize those Circumstances which would be heavy to you ; but since our Saviour has gone through the same are not only rendered tolerable, but one can also find a Blessing therein.

This is a peculiar Grace, which those who have attain'd are arriv'd to a certain Stature in Christianity, wherein if they continue advancing they will quickly come to a Station, wherefrom though they view other christian Institutions as not beyond their Comprehension, but they respect them for what they are, they will yet-esteem themselves the least of all. ||

Yea, you must be so ingratiated with the crucified Jesus as to possess all your Happiness in Him, not only occasional, but also absolute; not only official, (both ecclesiastical and domestic) but also sabbatic; not temporal only, but also eternal. If He had continued in the Greatness of his Godhead, you could have had no Access to Him nor Correspondence with Him; but now He is become a Child, and has yielded up his Body, Soul and Spirit for you on Purpose to endear Himself to you, and to win your Hearts, you have free Liberty of approaching Him, and can be so domestically near to Him as to have your present and future Felicity in Him. And you should cleave to Him not only when stimulated by a burthensome Necessity, but also of Choice and Freedom, so as even amidst the most flourishing Possessions and completest Situations to have Him nearest your Hearts, and to acknowledge both in Profession and Practice that the Boy born in Bethlehem Ephratah and slain on Golgotha is your only supreme Happiness above all Comprehension and Comparison.

|| Mark ix. 35.

DISCOURSE IV.

Delivered the same Year at LEMSTER in
HEREFORDSHIRE.

LUKE vii. 41. 42.

There was a certain Creditor which had two Debtors: the one owed five hundred Pence, and the other fifty. And when they had Nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both.

OUR Saviour's Love to Sinners is verified and exemplified in many Examples in the New Testament, and particularly in this of a Creditor He appears most lovely and altogether amiable; since herein is evidenced his free Acceptance of Sinners, and his full and absolute Acquittance of them, whether more or less criminal.

Although the Depravity of human Nature is such that most Men sooner use other Methods, though ever so heavy and burthensome to save themselves than be at once beholden to Jesus for a free Pardon and gratuitous Salvation, and when they see Instances of his pardoning Grace and Mercy too frequently grudge and envy those who are Partakers thereof, deeming our Saviour's Love lost and his Favour ill-bestowed on those whom they esteem undeserving Objects; yet our Saviour has by this Specimen of his free Grace prescinded all such Misapprehensions, and has demonstrated Himself so liberal a Creditor that He receives all Debtors who come to Him, and upon their proving insolvent, He totally discharges them from all their Debts,
how

how great and numerous soever they are. Accordingly I have here the three following Particulars to speak of,

- I. The Creditor.
- II. The Debtors.
- III. His frankly forgiving them.

I. As to the first of these, a Creditor is a Person who entrusts another with a Loan; and according to this Definition our Saviour is the universal Creditor of all Mankind. He it is to whom all are indebted for their present and future Happiness: when He created Man, *He made him in his own Image and Likeness*; He formed him in *Righteousness and true Holiness**; this was a sacred Depositum, which if Man had maintained He would ever have continu'd happy. Yet when this first Grace was squander'd away, our Saviour still entrusted the Gentiles with a Consciousness of good and evil, *their Conscience bearing them Witness, and their Thoughts mean while accusing or else excusing one another*†: and to the Jews *He committed the Oracles of God*‡. Hence both Jews and Gentiles were indebted to Him for his Love, and were under an indispensable Obligation of Gratitude and Obeisance.

And since the sacred Writings all testified of his coming in the Flesh, and continually inculcated his Incarnation and Crucifixion as the last Plan of Operations which He would use for the eternal Recovery of Men, this render'd those divine Pandects a Treasure of unspeakable Value, a Trust of the highest Importance: this therefore shew'd that He put great Confidence in the People He deposited them with, and from whom also He expected a suitable Return.

Indeed our Saviour is every Man's Creditor, inasmuch as He has given all Men their Existence, Life, Health and all present Blessings; and all human Beings are indebted to Him for their Creation and Preservation, so that even those who do not yet own Him as their Redeemer,

* Gen. i. 26, 27.

Eph. iv. 24.

† Rom. ii. 15.

‡ Rom. iii. 2.

are however already oblig'd to acknowledge Him as their Creator, and to love, thank and praise Him accordingly.

But now once in the End of the World our Saviour hath appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of Himself*, and hereby has render'd every human Creature his Debtor, He has a Demand upon all Mankind; He claims all, and would have all Men be his, as the only Recompence they can make Him for his meritorious Passion and Death. *He is the Propitiation for our Sins: and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole world* †. He has made a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for you; He has aton'd for all your Offences, and has paid off all your Debts by dying for you on the Cross. Have you been ignorant of Him and neglected Him as your Creator and Preserver? *The Times of this Ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all Men every where to come to his Son Jesus Christ* ‡, since He has been offer'd to bear their Sins, and He is the only Creditor that ever laid down his Life for his Debtors.

II. I am now to speak of the Debtors: Sins are Debts, and Sinners are Debtors; wherefore our Lord has taught us to pray, *forgive us our Debts*, Matt. vi. 12. And in the Text before us He has thus specified the different Debts of his Debtors, *the one ow'd five hundred pence, and the other fifty*; when any Men think themselves little Sinners and imagine they are less Offenders than others, and exprefs their Sentiments by declaring they are not so bad as their Neighbours, but affirm they have done more external Good and less external Evil than many do, and that they pay all Persons their due, and practise certain exterior Formalities and ceremonious Modes, this is a clear Demonstration of the Insensibility and Deadness of such Men's Hearts, and a plain Confession that they feel little or no Need at all of a Saviour; nor will such People so long as they conceit they have so many specious Virtues in them be willing to be rank'd with Bankrupts who must accept of Absolution freely at their Creditor's Hands.

* Heb. ix. 26. † 1 John ii. 2. ‡ Acts xvii. 30.

Who-

Whosoever looks into his Heart and sees his inward Corruption, Misery and Helplessness will feel enough to be ashamed of and to condemn himself for and to lay Him low in the Dust before the Saviour's pierc'd Feet for a Pardon; such a one need not commit Sin outwardly to make himself a poor Sinner; he will find enough in his fallen Nature to accuse and convict himself of, and can be both a Witness and a Judge against himself, and will upon Account of his innate Turpitude and Sinfulness be induc'd to own if a Sentence of eternal Condemnation was pronounc'd against him, it would be no more than his inward Apostacy, Demerit and Iniquity deserve. Of this the original Stain and Pollution of every one's Nature may convince him, when he is duly sensible thereof; and the Plague of Sin which has infected the whole human Soul and Body, together with all the Faculties of the one and all the Members of the other, does ever afford awaken'd Hearts an Occasion of Blushing, Consternation and Self-abasement.

Who then would scruple and hesitate at reckoning himself a Debtor that owes five hundred Pence? Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Who that is acquainted with the Contagion of his Heart, the Vanity of his Thoughts, the Lustfulness of his Flesh and the Badness of his Life and Actions will refuse being reckon'd the greatest Debtor? Yea, every one who thoroughly knows his Ruin and Wretchedness will count himself *the chief of Sinners**; and such our Saviour receives most readily: the more Sinners you are the more open-heartedly you may come to Him, and may be the more assur'd of Acceptance with Him and of finding Grace and Favour in his Presence.

All Debtors therefore may and ought to come to Him for their full and free Discharge; and every one is indebted to Him for his Creation and Preservation; but chiefly one is oblig'd to acknowledge ones self eternally in Debt to Him for his Work of Redemption; hereby He has made poor Sinners his Debtors in an unspeakable Measure; and indeed not all our Debts and Trespases against the Law,

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

nor the whole Catalogue of Crimes against the Commandments render us so grievous and displeasing to Him as when we have long neglected and slighted his great Salvation; this therefore should give us the most Disgust and Displeasure with ourselves, and might also render us most criminal and obnoxious to Him; yet He makes no Exceptions when the Debtors come before Him; He neither upbraids them with the Number nor Heinousness of their Crimes, but forgives the Debtor of five hundred Pence and him of fifty with the same Liberality and Gratuitousness; and this is now the third Thing to be spoken of.

III. *And when they had Nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both.* Whosoever will accept of a Pardon frankly, certainly obtains it; every one who is so poor and needy that He has Nothing, and can neither give nor proffer any Thing either as an Equivalent Value or even as a partial Price for his Discharge, but confesses himself quite unable to pay the least towards it, gains a total Remission gratis. This is an Act of free Grace in the Creditor, who delights in absolving his insolvent Debtors gratuitously, and thus entirely deserves and justly claims all the Glory and Praise of such an unmerited Amnesty.

In Fact our Saviour is both Creditor and *Surety*, Hebr. vii. 22. He is the Bondsman of his People: and this is the Cause of his pardoning them so freely. He has taken the whole Debt upon Himself, and has paid it all off; all the Sins of Men were charg'd upon Him; He bore the Debts of all the World; both original and actual Sins were plac'd to his Account, and He by dying on the Cross made a full Payment of them all; He satisfied for the Crimes of the first Man, and aton'd for the Trespasses of all his Posterity. He has given Himself a Sacrifice for you, and has made Amends for all your Faults; all your Sins were laid upon Him, and He has bore the Curse and Penalty of them; He has by his Death made a full Recompence for your Iniquities, and procur'd you a perfect and compleat Indemnification: in his bleeding Wounds all your Offences were buried, and shall no more be remember'd against you. When He was slain upon the Tree the Blood that flow'd from his Head, Heart, Hands
and

and Feet blotted out all your Transgressions, and obliterated the whole Catalogue of your Offences ; He has wash'd away all your Breaches of the Law, He has expung'd all your Violations of the Gospel, and has fully eras'd all your Misdemeanours both against God and your Neighbours, and has totally absolv'd you from all your Vices, and has absolutely eradicated all your Misdeeds in Thought, Word and Work now, henceforth and for ever and ever.

Never therefore was such a Creditor as Jesus, who had the Debts of all his Debtors imputed to Him, and discharg'd them at the Expence of his own Heart's Blood : thus He has wip'd away all your Crimes ; He has paid off the whole Bill, has cancell'd the Bond and annihilated the Handwriting that was against you, and has seal'd your Pardon eternally secure. You have therefore only to accept his Act of Grace, that his free Remission may have its Effect and his Absolution be realiz'd in you. And each one may justly be humbl'd for having so long indolently neglected and wilfully resisted his pardoning Mercy ; this may afford all of you an Occasion of Blushing and Shamefacedness before your Creditor, who is also your Surety ; and may excite you to admire his Goodness, that He is still loving, merciful and gracious towards you, and will frankly forgive and entirely forget all your Misbehaviour towards Him, and set you quite free. You have stood out against Him as long as you could, and would not have come to Him at all, if you could possibly have sav'd yourselves without Him ; therefore He is not beholden to you, but you are beholden to Him for his speedy Admission of you to his Favour, his ready Acceptance of you and his full, final and irreversible Acquittance of you. Since therefore you have resisted our Saviour as long as you could, and slighted the Intimations, Vocations, Suggestions and Motions of his Spirit as much as you dar'd, and Nothing but the absolute Impossibility of being sav'd any other Way has strictly necessitated you to flee to Him, and He is still so abundantly kind and good as to accept you, you ought to bow before his Mercy-Seat, and receive his Pardon on your Knees, and believe you can never in Time nor Eternity thank Him enough for it.

F I N I S.

